

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An electronic control unit comprising:
 - memory means for storing data;
 - operation means for performing various control operations based on a predetermined control program by using the data stored in the memory means, the control operations including a floating-point calculation in which a floating-point data is used;
 - non-numeric checking means for checking whether the floating-point data includes non-numeric; and
 - backup means for performing backup processing in place of the floating-point calculation using the floating-point data including the non-numeric, when the non-numeric is determined by the non-numeric checking.
2. The electronic control unit as in claim 1, wherein:
 - the backup means includes data initializing means for initializing the data in the memory means when the existence of the non-numeric is determined by the non-numeric checking means.
3. The electronic control unit as in claim 2, wherein:
 - the data initializing means initializes the data in the memory means by writing into the memory means default values ineffective to control operations.
4. The electronic control unit as in claim 1, wherein:
 - the memory means is a non-volatile memory which

maintains storing the data even when the operation means is in inoperative condition, and includes a storage area for storing the floating-point data; and

the non-numeric checking means, in system initialization processing performed at the time of starting the operations of the operation means, performs non-numeric checking for the storage area storing the floating-point data.

5. The electronic control unit as in claim 1, wherein:
the non-numeric checking means performs non-numeric checking at idle time in the various control operations during normal operations of the operation means.

6. The electronic control unit as in claim 1, further comprising:

resetting means for resetting the operation means when the existence of the non-numeric is determined by the non-numeric checking means during normal operation of the operation means.

7. The electronic control unit as in claim 1, further comprising:

a watchdog circuit for monitoring a watchdog clear signal periodically produced from the operation means and outputting a reset signal to the operation means each time the periodicity of inversion of the watchdog clear signal is lost,

wherein the operation means discontinues inversion of the watchdog clear signal when the existence of the non-numeric

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is determined by the non-numeric checking means.

8. The electronic control unit as in claim 1, wherein:
the backup means includes interrupt disabling means
for disabling all interrupts when the existence of the non-numeric
is determined by the non-numeric checking means.

9. The electronic control unit as in claim 1, wherein:
the backup means initializes only the data in the
storage means without resetting the operation means.

10. The electronic control unit as in claim 1, wherein:
the operation means is programmed to control an
internal combustion engine.

11. The electronic control unit as in claim 1, wherein:
the non-numeric checking means checks whether the
floating-point data used in the floating-point calculation is
non-numeric for each floating-point calculation.

12. The electronic control unit as in claim 1, wherein:
the non-numeric checking means checks whether the
floating-point data to affect the calculation is non-numeric for
each floating-point calculation.

13. The electronic control unit as in claim 1, wherein:
the non-numeric checking means checks whether any one

of all pieces of the floating-point data is non-numeric.

14. The electronic control unit as in claim 1, wherein:
the operation means sets non-numeric determination flag each time it is determined that the floating-point data is non-numeric;

the non-numeric checking means checks the non-numeric determination flag for non-numeric; and

the backup means performs the backup processing based on a result of checking the non-numeric determination flag.

15. The electronic control unit as in claim 1, wherein:
the backup means uses an integer data as a backup value instead of the floating-point data.

16. The electronic control unit as in claim 1, wherein:
the backup means performs calculations using integer data instead of the floating-point calculations.

17. The electronic control unit as in claim 1, wherein:
the backup means performs calculations using integer data when the non-numeric is found to exist, and the floating-point data including the non-numeric is initialized to a default value after the calculation using the integer data has been completed or a predetermined time has elapsed.

18. An electronic control method for a vehicle comprising

the steps of:

checking floating-point data for non-numeric, the floating-point data being for use in a calculation of a control value for the vehicle; and

19. The electronic control method as in claim 18, wherein:
the disabling step includes a step of initializing the floating-point data stored in a memory to a value which is ineffective to the calculation of the control value.

the disabling step calculates the control value by replacing the floating-point data including the non-numeric with an integer value.